

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6404

INFO AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0853

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, ECON, ETRD, RW, BY

SUBJECT: VISIT OF PRESIDENT BAGAZA TO RWANDA

REF: KIGALI 913

1. RWANDAN AMBASSADOR HERE HAS ALSO BEEN TELLING DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES THAT PRESIDENT BAGAZA IS DUE TO PAY STATE VISIT TO PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA FROM AGUSUT ONE TO THREE. THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT TIMING, BUT WE HEAR THAT BOTH PRESIDENTS WANT TO GET BILATERAL AFFAIRS IN BETTER SHAPE BEFORE PLANNED TRIPARTITE MEETING (WITH MOBUTU) IN SEPTEMBER. IF THIS VISIT COMES OFF, IT PRESUMABLY MEANS THAT BAGAZA FEELS CONFIDENT ENOUGH OF HIS POSITION AGAIN (AFTER ARMY "STRIKE" OF LAST WEEK) TO CHANCE THREE DAYS' ABSENCE FROM BURUNDI.

2. THERE IS CERTAINLY A GREAT AMOUNT TO DO TO REFURBISH BILATERAL RELATIONS, WHICH HAVE DETERIORATED SERIOUSLY SINCE MICOMBERO'S OUSTER NINE MONTHS AGO. THOUGH SUPERFICIALLY CORRECT (AS WE SEE IT FROM HERE), ATTITUDES OF EACH COUNTRY TOWARD OTHERS ARE MARKED BY GROWING SUSPICION, CONSIDERABLE RECRIMINATION, AND UNWILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE COOPERATIVE ACTIONS. WHILE RWANDA IS UPSET BY BURUNDI'S SOVIET-SUPPORTED ARMS BUILDUP, BURUNDI IS
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ANGRY OVER RWANDA'S LURING OF 4,000 TO 5,000 TONS OF COFFEE FROM BURUNDI AT COST TO BUJUMBURA FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES OF OVER DOLS 20 MILLION. AT LEAST SOME BURUNDIAN OFFICIALS THINK RWANDA IS TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SETTLING IN PERIOD OF BAGAZA REGIME TO PROMOTE BURUNDIAN HUTUS TO ESCALATE DEMANDS FOR CHANGE AND REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER. RWANDANS ARE DISAPPOINTED BY SLOW PACE OF IMPROVEMENT FOR HUTU MASSES OF BURUNDI. EACH

SIDE HAS LET SLIP THE EMBRYONIC JOINT COMMITTEES FOR COORDINATED ECONOMIC PLANNING, COMBINED INVESTMENT PROJECTS, EASIER TRANS-BORDER FLOWS, ETC. THAT HAD GOTTEN UNDERWAY IN 1975 AND 1976.

3. ONLY THE TWO PRESIDENTS CAN STOP THIS EROSIVE MALAISE AND RESTORE AN ORIENTATION TOWARD GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS, BUT EVEN FOR THEM, IT WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE FORM OF MORE THAN SWEET TALK IN GENERALITIES IF ANY LASTING FOUNDATIONS ARE TO BE LAID. BAGAZA IS CURRENTLY IN A WEAKENED DOMESTIC POSITION, AND HE AND HIS OPPONENTS ARE PROBABLY DIVIDED TOO ON HOW FAR TO GO TO RENEW RECONCILIATION WITH RWANDA. THERE IS NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT BAGAZA WANTS BETTER, EVEN CLOSE, TIES WITH RWANDA, AND THAT HE IS IN A FIGHTING MOOD TO REASSERT HIS PREEMINENCE.

MARK

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